

Questions from RFP - 2034 - Kinship

1. In reference to 3.5 on page 7, regarding the outcome of increasing the number of kinship families available, does DSS have a specific target number identified?

The Department of Social Services does not have a specific target number identified for increasing the number of kinship families. DSS will look at data including, but not limited to the following outcomes:

- Is there a decrease in the number of prospective kinship families who are non-responsive when contacted about a home study?
- Of the prospective kinship families referred, has there been an increase in the number of families who complete the home study process?
- Has there been an increase in the number of children placed with a kinship resource during each quarter and at the end of the fiscal year?

2. In the 7 CPS regions, what is the anticipated percentage or distribution per region of referrals for kinship home studies? This would affect our proposed staffing pattern.

Below is the number of kinship or parental home study requests referred to each region in FY12.

Region 1 = 68 referrals

Region 2 = 39 referrals

Region 3 = 41 referrals

Region 4 = 95 referrals

Region 5 = 60 referrals

Region 6 = 82 referrals

Region 7 = 67 referrals

3. What is the anticipated completion rate of kinship home studies per region, compared to the number of referrals?

Below is the number of requests completed for each region in FY12.

Region 1 = 27 out of 68

Region 2 = 10 out of 39

Region 3 = 13 out of 41

Region 4 = 33 out of 95

Region 5 = 37 out of 60

Region 6 = 36 out of 82

Region 7 = 23 out of 67

4. Will DSS require that child abuse registries be checked in every state where the applicant/s have resided, as DSS currently requires for foster care/adoption?

YES - DSS requires child abuse/neglect registries be checked in all states where prospective kinship resources have lived beginning at age 10. States have different laws governing the release of information from their registries so DSS accepts whatever can be obtained.

5. What are income/financial guidelines for kinship home studies (e.g., can they be receiving TANF, SSI, Medicaid, etc.)?

Prospective kinship families should be able to demonstrate they can support family members living in their home through income from employment, social security benefits or other types of public assistance like SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Energy Assistance, Child Support, Child Care Assistance, etc.

DSS does not want to rule out or deny approval of a kinship resource due to financial issues, unless resource options have been explored and placement would not be in the best interest of the child and family.

6. The DSS-CPS Policy and Procedures Manual, ICPC & Kinship Home Studies, page 22 allows 60 days to complete a home study. In the Kinship RFP, Section 3.1.B, on page 5, the RFP requires home studies to be completed within 30 days of the request to complete a home study. Our experience is that completing the required background checks within 30 days could be extremely difficult. Please comment on the reasons for reducing the time period to 30 days, and the accommodations DSS will make to ensure that background checks can be completed within that time. Will DSS facilitate in-state and out-of-state criminal records checks?

DSS is developing a process to obtain central registry and DCI criminal background checks prior to making a kinship home study referral. DSS will work with the successful Offeror to evaluate if the 30 day timeframe is obtainable when the central registry and DCI criminal background checks are completed prior to the referral.

7. Will DSS require FBI checks on kinship families? Will DSS make resources available to the contractor to facilitate this?

The statutes regarding criminal background checks do not allow DSS to conduct FBI criminal background checks for prospective kinship families.

8. Would you consider contracting with providers who do not have a state wide presence or are you aware of other providers who would be open to subcontracting with us to offer services in western SD?

DSS will review all Request for Proposals submitted. The Offeror must be able to demonstrate in their proposal how they will provide the service statewide.

9. Section 3.1.A. The vendor will complete kinship home studies within each of the seven CPS regions within 30 days of the request to complete a home study.

- A few years ago (2009?), Children's Home Society worked with Child Protection Services to create a procedure for the handling of kinship home study requests that is now part of the CPS Policy and Procedure Manual. CPS found it critical that more families were given ample opportunity to complete and return paperwork that was required to initiate a home study. At that time, the procedure was implemented that gave families two weeks from the time the initial packet (with a stamped return envelope) was received by them to respond, followed by two reminder letters with two weeks given after each is sent. Finally, if there is no response, a closure letter would be sent. The closure letter is sent 6 weeks after the initial packet. For in-state referrals, completed packets are returned as little as 10% of the time before the first reminder is sent. Background checks are initiated once paperwork is returned. Those results can take a few days to a few months to receive. Therefore, in most cases, 30 days have expired before the home visit is even scheduled. Could the 30 days begin once all required background checks are received?

The process described above is being reevaluated by DSS with expected changes during the next contract year. DSS is developing a process to obtain central registry and DCI criminal background checks prior to making a kinship home study referral. DSS will work with the

successful Offeror to evaluate if the 30 day timeframe is obtainable when the central registry and DCI criminal background checks are completed prior to the referral.

10. Is the 30 day expectation including weekends/holidays? Or is it 30 working days?

30 business days

11. ICPC request are currently given 60 days for completion. Is the expectation that those will also be completed in 30 days?

The expectation of 60 days for completion through ICPC will remain at 60 days.

12. Section 3.1.G. Monitoring consistency and quality.

Each CPS office and even different supervisors within one office have differing expectations about what information must be included in the final home study in order for it to be considered sufficiently complete (adequate references or contacts, out-of-state background info, other safety-related information). This can have a great deal of impact on the consistency of the study and the time needed to complete the study. Will there be state-wide standardization of what is required in every study so that quality of studies and timeframes can be managed more consistently?

YES - there will be state-wide standardization of what is required in every study so that quality of studies and timeframes can be managed more consistently.

13. Section 3.1.H. Offeror will complete the Inquiry process in FACIS

Currently, we have been instructed NOT to enter initial information onto FACIS for kinship requests. Those are completed by the requesting office to minimize possible non-CPS staff error. CHS kinship staff have not been trained on FACIS. Will the expectation be that there will be no resource information in FACIS on these families and that the offerer will now input all of that initial information? How much time should be allotted to data entry for this information?

DSS will initiate the Resource Inquiry screen in FACIS. DSS will take into consideration information obtained and when it is obtained and then make a decision regarding if DSS or the Offeror will enter

additional information in the Resource Inquiry Screen. The Offeror will be trained in FACIS to complete this.

14. Out-of-state central registry information has become a very complex background check with different forms for each state that require notarization by the family. The expectation about forms for other states has changed back and forth over the past couple years and also impacts timeliness of home study completion. We currently have instruction to go back to time of birth. Do out-of-state central registry forms need to be completed since birth, or just for the past ten (10) years?

DSS requires child abuse/neglect registries be checked in all states where prospective kinship resources have lived beginning at age 10. States have different laws governing the release of information from their registries so DSS accepts whatever can be obtained.